



The New Science
of
Controlled Breathing

By

EDWARD LANKOW

Lesson I

Importance of Consciously Controlled
Breathing

CORRECTIVE EATING SOCIETY, INC.

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THE NEW SCIENCE OF CONTROLLED BREATHING

The Secret of Strength,
Energy and Beauty--Through
Breath Control

By EDWARD LANKOW

Leading basso with the Boston, Metropolitan and
Chicago Opera Companies. World-renowned
singer and teacher of the new science
of controlled breathing

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“And the Lord God . . . breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul.”

FOREWORD

. The staff of life is not bread—it is *breath*. For you can live days without drink, and weeks without food. But you can only live a few minutes without air.

You would think, inasmuch as the human race has been breathing for at least five hundred thousand years, that men and women today would know *how* to breathe.

As a matter of fact, however, consciously controlled breathing is known to but very few people. These few fortunate individuals have been rewarded by Nature in the way Nature always rewards those who follow her laws.

She blesses them with magnificent constitutions, tireless energy and the strength and beauty that comes from radiant health; skin that shows the rich blood flowing under its clear surfaces, sparkling eyes, and the vivacious manner that attracts and holds the attention of men and women alike.

This, Nature does for those who use rightly her great gift.

Of the few in all the world who know the inmost secrets of the art of breathing, Edward Lankow, the talented author of this course, is perhaps the greatest.

The Editor of Physical Culture Magazine says of him:

“Mr. Edward Lankow is rated by many critics as the greatest basso in America. The richness, resonance, depth, power, flexibility and cello-like beauty of his voice has not been duplicated in America for years. Mr. Lankow is thirty-five years old; weight, 205 pounds stripped; height 6 feet, 1½ inches; chest 44½ inches; waist, 38 inches. He is Russian-American, born in Tarrytown, N. Y.

In 1902, at the age of nineteen, Lankow was offered the principle Bass engagement with the “Bostonians” by Barnabee and MacDonald, which he declined on account of a desire for further study. The same year he was offered a Tour with Adelina Patti, which he declined for the same reason. In 1906 he started his career in Europe, where he

sang at all the principle opera houses, and in concerts. In 1911 he returned to America and made his debut on the opening evening of the season with the Boston Opera Company. Before going to Boston, he studied Pelleas et Mellisande in Paris, at the first rehearsal at which the famous composer Debussy was present, he received the superlative compliment from the composer, who said to him "In your voice, I hear for the first the mystic timbre of voice I thought of when I composed the part fifteen years ago." Mr. Lankow sang all the nine performances of this opera in Boston with Mme. Leblanc and Mary Garden.

In 1912-1913 at the first performance of the Magic Flute at the Metropolitan Opera House, the management brought Mr. Lankow over from Boston for the first half dozen performances, where three of the New York newspaper critics pronounced him the greatest basso in America—one critic saying "A voice of amazing beauty, he is by long odds the greatest basso in America."

In April, 1917, while attending a garden party at Governor's Island, Mr.

Lankow noticed that the speaking voice of Colonel Hartman was naturally exceedingly well placed (or resonant) and asked the Colonel if he had studied to produce it that way. To which the Colonel answered, "No, I always spoke that way, and always wanted to find out how I did it so as to show it to younger officers—but I couldn't."

Mr. Lankow then showed the Colonel by pressing his hand on the Colonel's abdomen how by Nature he used that organ in support—a support which most of us had to learn but which came quite natural to him. The quick mind of Colonel Hartman absorbed the value of the idea at once, and he asked Mr. Lankow to teach this subject at Camp Gordon, Ga., the largest development camp in the country.

Here official instructors of various subjects from all the other camps in the country from Maine to San Francisco were gathered for special instructions—from 6.45 A. M. Mr. Lankow would have classes ranging from 25 to 1100, and gradually developed 41 officer assistant instructors, so that several thou-

sand men were doing the work at the same time. The Commanding General, Brigadier General William Sage and all of his staff were in his morning class.

After the third week, Mr. Lankow was asked to mess at Headquarters, and live at the former home of Brigadier General Shaw. The results of his work were more than astounding.

Men who had apparently no voices at all, and who had pain in the throat while giving commands, suddenly found that it was a pleasure to use the voice. On the other hand, men whose health was run down so that they were on their way to forced retirement, were so changed in appearance that their civilian friends asked them what they were doing.

Surgeon General Rupert Blue thought so highly of the health-building power of Mr. Lankow's course of instruction that he made the following statement to Mr. Lankow in Washington:

"Use my name for anything you like in connection with your system of teaching breath control."

Another health authority said:

"Give the world two generations of children taught this trained, scientific

method of breathing and you'll make the community free of consumption."

Many of the world's greatest singers have profited by Mr. Lankow's instructions. Mary Garden, Director of the Chicago Opera Company and famous prima donna, has written "Half the world does not know that correct breathing means health, happiness and contentment. I had the joy of learning this truth from Mr. Lankow. Every day my voice became better—and my health too. His work is *really great.*"

In this complete course of "Lessons" Mr. Lankow tells all the secrets of his wonderful work.

Within a few days you, too, by following the simple directions Mr. Lankow advises, may be well on the road to such health, strength, mental clearness and physical beauty as you have never known before.

For you will be working in harmony with Nature—and with Nature's great and beneficent laws.

The Publisher.

LESSON I

Importance of Consciously Controlled Breathing

Air is truly the breath of life. It is the vital fluid that animates our being; that stimulates into activity every one of the billion of cells that go to make up the body.

It is a fact, conceded by every scientific man today, that the oxygen in the air we breathe is absolutely the greatest purifying force in all Nature.

Yet there is but one way to get oxygen into your lungs and into your system—and this is to breathe it in.

As long ago as two thousand years before the Christian Era, the Chinese and the Hindoos made elaborate studies in the art of breathing. Indeed, they developed a complex science having to do with control of the breath. Certain forms of breathing were employed for the cure of various diseases. Thus, for example, it was believed that controlled inhalations and exhalations would allay

fevers; or, in a contrary condition of the body, induce a salutary rise in temperature.

In India the Buddhist priests were at pains to practice breath-control so as always to command deep, quiet action of the lungs. In this measured breathing the number of breaths was greatly reduced. The usual eighteen to twenty-two breaths per minute were reduced to six or eight. Experience justified the theories of the priests concerning the value of a controlled breathing. Its merits have stood the tests of ages, and today, in the Orient proper, breathing is still deemed the fountain of health.

Aside from the distinctly physical advantages derived from breath-control, there results also a poise of mind that is most desirable in its benefits to the whole nature of the man.

Later in history both the Greeks and the Romans practiced controlled breathing for hygienic purposes and for the attainment of bodily perfection. They even went further than the Orientals of an earlier epoch, for they deliberately set out to enlarge the chest cavity. They

realized that the principal part of the body is the trunk, and that in this the chief constituent is the chest. The success they attained in the development of superb physiques is demonstrated by the examples that survived to us of their classic art. They were able to attain a bodily perfection unequaled in the history of the world. In their methods, controlled breathing was the chief agent.

In Europe, during the Middle Ages, this science of breath suffered from increasing neglect, and finally died out.

As an appalling commentary on the neglect of proper breathing by the mass of mankind, we may consider the fact, now generally admitted by the medical profession, that fully one half of the world's death-rate is due to consumption.

The fact could hardly be otherwise. Any experienced physician is well aware that only a small part of the lungs is ordinarily used by the average person. A large portion of the breathing apparatus is in most cases never employed at all. Naturally, inevitably, such areas in the lungs weaken and become degener-

ate. They offer a breeding place for the germs of various infections.

Why Ordinary Systems of Exercise Fail

The various systems of gymnastics are designed for the surface-building of the body. The exercises affect almost exclusively the outer muscular structure. The scientific cultivation of the breath, on the contrary, acts directly on the inner, vital organs. These are strengthened and developed from the outset. Thus a sure foundation is laid on which to build toward physical perfection, and the true beauty which is, or should be, the heritage of every healthy man or woman. Any ordinary method must of necessity prove itself as ineffective as it is illogical.

The majority of athletes exhibit exterior muscles of most impressive bulk. It is a curious fact, however, that the bony structure, which measures the chest cavity, shows only a trifling development when deprived of its muscular support. It must always be borne in mind that the strength of the body lies in its organic power—not in the sur-

face muscles. In fact, the larger the surface muscles are, the more strength is taken from the organic vitality in order to support and feed them. It is by reason of this drain upon the inner forces that athletes so often die young. Abnormal development of the muscular system at the expense of organic vitality is a folly always dangerous, often fatal.

How We Live On Air

Air is the substance on which principally we feed. What we eat is of secondary importance. The purity of the blood and the strength of the arteries through which it throbs depend absolutely upon right breathing. The greater the quantity of air taken into the lungs, the more oxygen for the purification of the blood—the constant and prime requirement for health.

The system of breathing which I advocate in this work is not a mere matter of theory, something vague and experimental. It is concrete; it is exact; its worth has been definitely proved. I have demonstrated the merit of the

exercises in my own case. During a year and a half of practice my chest measurement increased from thirty-eight inches to forty-two.

Breathing Color Into Pale Faces

With many flat-chested and anemic girls I have seen an equally astonishing improvement. I have seen their chest develop, their busts become firm and rounded, and tell-tale hollows under their collar bones fill out.

Almost invariably, flabby muscles become resilient, pale sallow cheeks become pink with the sweet flush of healthy youth.

Incidentally, I have discovered a variety of virtues in controlled breathing. Thus, in the case of that most annoying among minor ailments, a cold, I have found that I could invariably be rid of it within twenty-four hours by means of strenuous breathing exercises for twenty minutes at a time repeated often during the day.

For a more formal indorsement of this system, I may refer to the Societe

Internationale de la Tuberculose. An investigation by the society was reported favorably at The Hague and London.

In this connection, it should be remembered that the world at large has not yet begun to realize the supreme value of correct, quiet, slow breathing for general health. Its practice regularly would unquestionably prove a preventative of tubercular disease. Its judicious employment by those already affected would prove a powerful remedial agent. Consumptives who seek the pure air of mountains or plains often fail to receive benefit, for the simple reason that they have never learned the proper manner of breathing. To such, the best of air is useless as the most nourishing food to the one who has no teeth with which to chew.

When one inhales, the lungs seem to grow. As the cells are filled with air, the chest proportionately enlarges. At the same time, the ribs and the diaphragm assume a new position. The result is that the chest, the between-rib muscles, and the diaphragm are all very

strenuously exercised. By proper breathing, the various muscles involved are constantly trained; they are developed and made elastic to such an extent that the lungs are not required to stand alone in their resistance against adverse conditions, both without and within.

The lungs expand during inhalation; they contract during exhalation. A full breath dilates the lungs to their maximum capacity; they relax to the minimum size when the breath is completely expelled. By practice one can readily learn to influence the various movements, and gradually to control them. The practice of the first exercises in the series given includes sudden exhalation, slow exhalation, and rhythmic exhalation. These tend to reduce the quantity of air that is left in the lungs when the breath is expelled. Such residual air is poisonous, and an excess of it, due to improper breathing, is very injurious. Its retention in the lung cells not only lessens the space available to be filled with fresh air, but it also acts as a direct agent for ill in the bodily processes.

How Consciously Controlled Breathing Makes You Resist Disease

It should be added, and with emphasis, that *the habit of deep breathing makes one immune to the germs of various diseases*. The practice of breath-control gives a toughened fiber to the whole breathing apparatus. This and the constant purifying of the blood develop the body's vital forces to the highest degree possible, against which disease is rendered powerless. Thus one may enter into possession of the health and strength that are his by right; and thus, and thus only, shall he know the joy of life.

Here is an illustration of what may be done by serious and persistent attention to breathing. It must be understood, however, that I by no means advise others to follow my example, although I believe it quite possible for anybody—man, woman, boy or girl—by constant practice, to develop the same perfect resistance that I myself have.

For a period of five years, I have made it a rule to dress in January exactly as in July—except in the matter of an over-

coat. I go without underclothing, I wear no waiscoat, (vest). I do not take exception to the wearing by others of such garments, during the winter months. But for myself, as I gradually learned to take advantage of systematic breathing exercises and thus to charge my blood abundantly with oxygen, the necessity for much clothing disappeared. Underwear grew to be uncomfortable. I found myself both happier and healthier without it. When I wore the heavier clothing in winter, I suffered from frequent colds. Now I am rarely troubled in that manner. If, through carelessness, I do catch cold, I am able easily to throw it off within twenty-four hours by means of extra practice in deep breathing, together with a short fast.

I do not wish to infer that the heavier clothing is the cause of colds. My point is, rather, that the extra amount of oxygen I take into my blood supplies the place of the garments formerly worn by me, as well as acts in consuming, or burning up, the poisonous material that gathers in the tissues, and tends to make you *feel* cold.

Let me repeat that I do not advise anyone to experiment with the wearing of summer apparel in winter until after several months of systematic breathing exercises, with the consequent enriching of the blood. The matter, like that of the cold bath, is one for individual discrimination.

In my own case, the lighter garb has become actually a necessity for comfort's sake.

Why We Should Establish Schools To Teach The New Science of Breathing

Whatever the different systems for muscular and health development may be, the value of developing those vital inner organs—the heart, the lungs and the digestive organs, is easily understood. A large arm, or a wonderful leg development cannot help these inner organs, if they are naturally weak, or if they have been weakened. The point is—what *will* give health to these organs the fundamental or motor power to all health

Special exercises for the lungs, that is, conscious deep breathing exercises

for a specific period of time, will give results which few realize. It is all so simple that most of us cannot believe it, like all truths. The maximum oxygenation of the blood through taking in large quantities of air—thereby feeding the organs with purer blood—the *improved circulation*, the exhilarated heartbeat, the drawing away of drowsiness from the brain, *the improved digestion through the unconscious massage of the lower organs*, all these will show what results are obtainable. If the children in our schools were taught conscious, deep, slow breathing at that period of their lives when body and mind are flexible, the habit would be easily formed for life. This habit would surely wipe out consumption within two generations. Millions of human beings die yearly from this, the greatest human menace. Why not, therefore, have schools for breathing. Surely this experiment is entitled to a place among the hundreds of other experiments which have been and which are being tried.

